# Ministry of Environment

## Plan for 2015-16



Government of Saskatchewan

# Statement from the Minister

*The Honourable Scott Moe*

*Minister of Environment*

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Environment's Operational Plan for 2015-16.

Government's Direction and Budget for 2015-16 is focused on *Keeping Saskatchewan Strong,* balancing building for the future with fiscal responsibility.

Aligned with this direction are the strategies and key actions that deliver the Ministry's mandate to manage the health of Saskatchewan's environment in a respectful, responsible and enforceable manner.

These key actions will support the government's direction by providing enhanced environmental protection, regulatory confidence and certainty, public service excellence and the sustainable use of natural resources to enhance economic and social benefits.

2015 is an exciting year for the Ministry. This year, the first edition of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code will take effect. This results-based approach will provide industry and communities the flexibility to come up with innovative solutions to achieve or surpass clearly-defined environmental outcomes and allows the Ministry to focus its resources on activities that pose the greatest environmental risks.

Saskatchewan's population and economy are both growing and global demand for its resources is high. However, these changes will also increase the pressures on our air, land and water. The Environmental Code will allow the Ministry to achieve its longer-term strategic outcomes to reduce risk and harm from environmental contamination, ensuring a clean and safe environment for communities and maintaining productive, resilient and biologically diverse landscapes.

The 2015-16 plan also describes how the Ministry is adopting a cumulative effects approach to environmental management by taking into account the combined effects of past, present and foreseeable human activities over time on the environment, economy and society in a particular place. Examples of this work include impacts of development through the Boreal Watershed Initiative and providing effective protection for caribou populations.

As further work on code chapters continue, the goals, strategies and key actions found in this plan will ensure that Saskatchewan remains a place for sustainable growth and development, and that Saskatchewan's environment is managed and protected for the well-being of the province, its people and its future.

The Ministry will report on progress made toward this plan in the 2015-16 Annual Report.

# Response to Government Direction

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to *Keeping Saskatchewan Strong*. The province faces challenges due to volatile resource revenue; however, Saskatchewan's economy is diverse and resilient. There are strengths in many sectors from agriculture and manufacturing to resources such as potash and uranium.

With controlled spending and continued support for the conditions necessary for economic growth, the Government will meet the needs of our growing province. Investments in people and infrastructure continue to support Government's commitment to establishing Saskatchewan as the best place to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life.

**Saskatchewan's Vision**

*"... to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."*

| Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people | Meeting the challenges of growth | Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people | Delivering responsive and responsible government |
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Government's vision and four goals provide the framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to align their programs and services and meet the needs of Saskatchewan's citizens.

All ministries and agencies will report on progress in their 2015-16 annual reports.

# Operational Plan

## Mandate Statement

The Ministry of Environment's role is to manage the health of Saskatchewan's environment in a respectful, responsible and enforceable manner that balances growth with sustainable development through objective, transparent and informed decision-making and stewardship.

## Mission Statement

The Ministry of Environment provides science-based solutions, compliance and mitigation measures aimed at protecting the environment, safeguarding communities and helping to ensure balanced economic growth and a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan residents.

## Government Goals

| Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people | Meeting the challenges of growth | Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people | Delivering responsive and responsible government |
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Strategic priority in support of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*: the Ministry promotes and regulates responsible development and industrial activity including protection of the environment through environmental assessment, management of industrial sites and compliance activities.

## Ministry Goal

Reduced risk and harm from environmental contamination

### Strategy

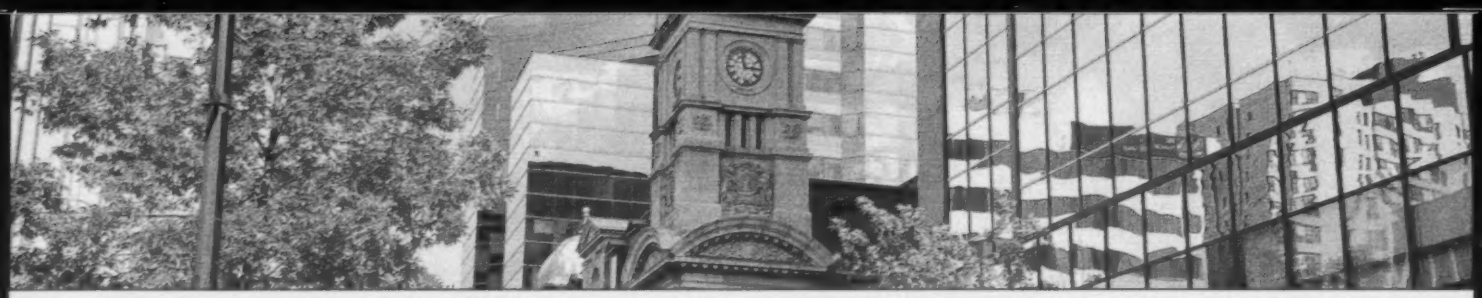
Environmental protection is based on a proactive approach to ensure effective management of the province's natural resources.

**Key Actions**

- Implement a results-based model that encourages innovation and use of alternative solutions to improve protection of the environment.
- Implement the Saskatchewan Environmental Code to reinforce recognized standards and best practices for compliance.
- Ensure pollution prevention through effective management of impacted sites and promotion of environmental stewardship.
- Minimize release of pollutants through compliance activities.
- Assess high-risk developments in the province to understand the cost and benefits of development and to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are in place in order to safeguard environmental and social priorities.

## Performance Measure

**Percentage of reportable spill incidents in compliance with notification**
Increase follow-up compliance on notification by 10 per cent.



Strategic priority in support of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*: the Ministry provides regulatory certainty through the use of recognized standards for informed decision-making to promote responsive and efficient regulations for a sustainable, competitive and diverse economy.

## Ministry Goal

Increased regulatory confidence/certainty and economic fairness

### Strategy

Decision-making is supported by a culture of innovative thinking, partnerships, high-quality data and a science-based approach.

**Key Actions**

- Utilize best available information and technology to assess and predict potential environmental outcomes and impacts to inform proposals for development and resource use/allocation.
- Provide high-quality, accessible information for clients to encourage and facilitate environmental monitoring and client data interpretation.
- Enhance client service associated with environmental assessments and regulatory functions through a streamlined approach that maximizes efficiency while maintaining the effectiveness of core Ministry priorities for the environment.
- Partner with universities, NGOs, intra- and inter-governmental jurisdictions and industry at the technical and policy development level to ensure best practices in environmental and resource management and to ensure strategic investment in research and development.
- Lead land use planning that is supported by high-quality data and stakeholder engagement for appropriate development and resource allocation of Crown lands.
- Support ongoing modernization and implementation of environmental legislation and regulations that remove regulatory overlap while maintaining standards for public safety and protection of the environment (e.g. Wildfire Management Act).
- Promote a commercially viable forest sector through a reliable forest inventory, diversification of forest products and businesses, investment in research and by encouraging sustainable use of biomass.
- Build a decision-making toolkit so that a regulatory framework can be established to balance greenhouse gas emissions abatement while supporting vigorous economic growth.

## Performance Measures

**Hunting, trapping and angling licence online transactions**
Increase number of online hunting, trapping and angling transactions.

**Sustainable timber harvest: percentage of annual allowable cut harvested**
Harvest does not exceed annual allowable cut.

Strategic priority in support of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*: the Ministry engages with partners and stakeholders to communicate its vision, goals and progress in achieving results.

## Ministry Goal

A clean and safe environment for communities

### Ministry Strategy

Resources are managed to ensure public safety and environmental sustainability.

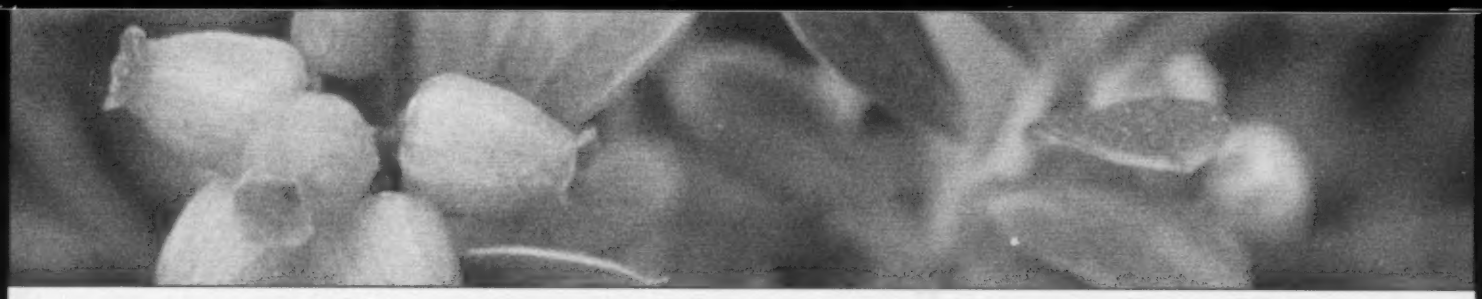
**Key Actions**

- Conduct assessments, audit and enforcement activities to ensure compliance with environmental standards and legislation.
- Support communities to advance sustainable development.
- Develop and implement a Ministry of Environment stakeholder engagement framework.
- Utilize a government-wide enterprise approach to achieve shared outcomes.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to promote the Ministry in areas such as environmental stewardship, economic activity and innovative partnerships.
- Maintain 'good' air quality through airshed management, monitoring, data, partnerships and national programs.
- Educate stakeholders on, seek support for and implement mitigation and prevention techniques for environmental sustainability.
- Work with municipalities and stakeholders to engage in activities for economic benefit while protecting and conserving natural resources.
- Collaborate with clients and stakeholders in providing operational and financial assurances for values at risk.
- Ensure effective solid waste management via landfills, transfer stations and recycling programs.
- Ensure public safety by focusing wildfire suppression activity on protection of people as the highest priority; work with stakeholders to help them understand, prepare for, and take responsibility to protect themselves from the risks of wildfire in order to ensure the safety and security of people, communities and public and industry infrastructure.

## Performance Measures

**Quality of Saskatchewan's air**
Air Quality Index is 'good' 95 per cent of the time or 'good' air quality days 95 per cent of the time.

**Recycling rates**
Maintain an 80 per cent recycling rate on beverage containers while optimizing waste recycling in all other recycled materials.



## Government Goals

| Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people | Meeting the challenges of growth | Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people | Delivering responsive and responsible government |
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Strategic priority in support of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*: the Ministry adopts a cumulative effects approach to environmental management by taking into account the combined effects of past, present and foreseeable human activities over time on the environment, economy and society in a particular place.

## Ministry Goal

Productive, resilient and biologically diverse landscapes

### Strategy

The Ministry prioritizes air, water, landscape and habitat protection through legislative frameworks, targeted initiatives, policies, programs and services to promote sustainable use of resources and economic benefits for Saskatchewan.

**Key Actions**

- Identify key indicators of sustainability for water, air, land and habitat for future state of the environment reporting.
- Develop and implement harvest plans to optimize sustainable commercial and recreational hunting and angling opportunities.
- Support the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre's (SKCDC) mandate for monitoring biodiversity by way of inventory and assessment through partnerships with environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs).
- Maximize sustainable forestry harvest volume schedule.
- Develop *Federal Species at Risk Act* (SARA) compliant range plans to maintain and protect Boreal caribou populations and habitat in the province.
- In partnership with other ministries and agencies, monitor the northern boreal watershed for impacts of development through baseline and risk assessment, monitoring change and where required, establishing thresholds for development.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of stewardship and incentive-based conservation tools to protect and recover species at risk in southwest Saskatchewan.
- Continue to expand, protect and manage sites within the provincial Representative Areas Network.
- Maintain productive and biologically diverse forests through forest renewal and protection from invasive insects and diseases.
- Monitor and evaluate federal regulation and recommended compliance standards including targets for GHG emissions and Aichi targets for biodiversity.

## Performance Measures

**Number of hectares in the Representative Areas Network**
Maintain Saskatchewan's commitment to conserve representative and unique landscapes.

**Percentage of forest renewal following timber harvest**
85 per cent attained.

## Government Goals

| Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people | Meeting the challenges of growth | Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people | Delivering responsive and responsible government |
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Strategic priority in support of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*: with a values-based organizational culture and highly-skilled and knowledgeable employees, the Ministry efficiently delivers effective programs and services.

## Ministry Goal

High client service satisfaction

### Strategy

An enterprise approach through effective and transparent engagement with our clients and the public is adopted as the way the Ministry does business.

**Key Actions**

- Utilize the Ministry's Public Service Renewal initiative and commitment to culture and values through employee recognition, engagement and effective communication.
- Review core programs to ensure efficient and effective delivery.
- Implement a learning and development strategy and succession plan to develop, attract, train and retain a skilled workforce.
- Foster an environment of continuing improvement through lean processes, project management and promotion of enterprise-wide collaboration.
- Refine and improve client and public access to information including measurement and reporting data through the Ministry website and social media channels.
- Optimize client access and delivery of services though the client service office, in-person and telephone service, online portals and the use of Customer Relations Management (CRM), Application Permitting and Permissions Management (APPM) systems and other customer relationship software for specialized service delivery.
- Implement clear and effective processes towards fulfilling the Ministry's legal Duty to Consult with First Nations and Métis communities.

## Performance Measure

**Business transactions completed online**

Increase online business transactions so that 80 per cent of all Ministry permits/business transactions are completed online by 2020. Increasing business transactions online will optimize client access to and delivery of services and decrease the time required for approval.

# Highlights

2015-16 Budget Highlights:

- The budget includes $25.3 million for SARCAN to help support the operation of its Beverage Container Collection and Recycling Program.
- The budget includes $200 thousand to enable the Ministry to fully transition its dispatch function to the Provincial Emergency Control Centre as part of a cost-effective, enterprise approach to government dispatch services.
- The Ministry will continue its transformation to a results-based approach in 2015-16 to increase responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness; enhance service quality; improve transparency and accountability; and encourage innovation. Investing in information technology is critical to this transition, so the 2015-16 budget includes $2.67 million for the Ministry to continue to modernize its information management systems.
- The budget includes $3.0 million in capital funding for aerial fleet enhancements which will enable the Ministry to complete the amphibious component of its fleet sustainability project by 2017-18.
- The Ministry will continue to take a landscape-based approach to species planning and management in 2015-16 with $250 thousand dedicated to continuing the research and development of a provincial Boreal caribou conservation plan and $200 thousand dedicated to continuing support for the implementation of recovery measures as part of the South of the Divide Action Plan in southern Saskatchewan.
- The budget includes $175 thousand in capital funding to continue enhancing the Wildfire Integrated Information Network (WIIN), a comprehensive system that enhances safety, ensures accountability, improves the efficiency of information management and enables real-time, knowledge-based decision-making within the wildfire management program.
- In 2015-16, further progress will be made on the Boreal Water Management Strategy to assess and maintain the ecological integrity of northern watersheds as the budget includes $1 million to complete the final year of this five-year project.

# Financial Summary

| 2015-16 Estimates | (in thousands of dollars) |
|---|---|
| Central Management and Services | 16,267 |
| Climate Change | 2,637 |
| Landscape Stewardship | 3,990 |
| Environmental Support | 7,617 |
| Fish and Wildlife | 10,711 |
| Compliance and Field Services | 17,637 |
| Environmental Protection | 34,348 |
| Forest Services | 10,978 |
| Wildfire Management | 55,988 |
| **Total Appropriation** | **160,173** |
| Capital Asset Acquisitions | (8,190) |
| Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment | 10,792 |
| **Total Expense** | **162,775** |

| FTE Complement | 866.4 |
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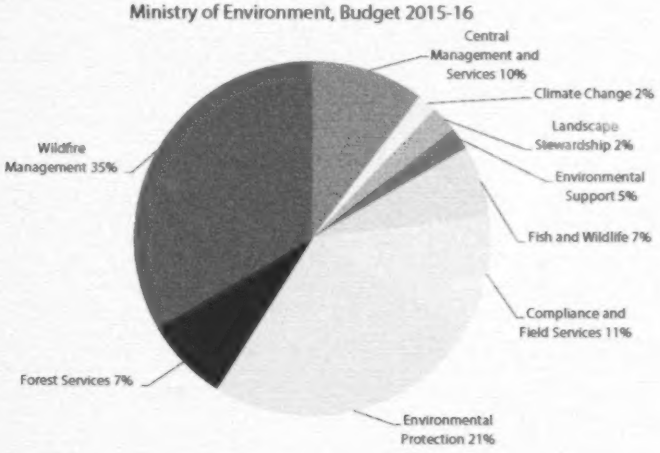
For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.saskatchewan.ca/budget




For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/environment for more information on the Ministry's programs and services.



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